

Christmas Letter



PARISH STAFF

Fr. Luke Meyer, Pastor – 3 years (19 years of priesthood)

Fr. Joseph Littlefield, Parochial Vicar – 6 months (3 years of priesthood)

Sue Ripplinger, Director of Parish Outreach & Sacramental Preparation – 13 years

Patrick McGuire, Director of Music – 4 years

Jenn Hulstein, Business Manager – 2 years

Emily Dietz, Marketing Coordinator – 1 year

Connie Savageau, Events Coordinator – 1 year

Sarah Bofferding, Director of Catechesis – 1 year

Alfred Schwalbe, NEW Director of Operations & Stewardship – 5 months

Mary German, NEW Administrative Office Specialist – 2 months

Peter O'Donnell, NEW Director of Marriage and Family Life – 2 months

Tyler Eastvold, NEW Property Manager – 2 months

Dcn. Ted LeMier, NEW Director of Adult Catechesis – 2 months (13 years on staff)

Diaconate Ministry

Deacon Ted LeMier – Newly Ordained (November 15th, 2025)

Deacon Pat Breen – 5 year anniversary

Deacon Ben Seitz – 5 year anniversary

Deacon Michael Dodge – 15 year anniversary



From the Pastor



December 25, 2025

Dear Sts. Anne and Joachim Parish Family,

It's hard for me to believe we have already arrived at Christmas this year. These months have flown by in our parish community. When I look back on this year, it has definitely been a year of significant transition in our parish. Six of our thirteen staff positions have welcomed new faces to our team, including two new clergy in Fr. Littlefield and Deacon Ted LeMier. As our parish activity grows, it has been a gift to welcome Alfred Schwalbe as Director of Operations and Stewardship. Our parish staff is now stronger than ever, and set to serve you with renewed vigor and teamwork in the New Year.

For me, our parish pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, and Loreto in October stands out as a unique highlight, especially with our new Holy Father Leo XIV in this Jubilee Year for the Universal Church. While I have made a number of pilgrimages over the years, there was something special especially about being in Assisi this year, the home of St. Francis. It is so fitting that this peculiar and simple saint of would be the one to leave a legacy not of institutions, writings, or buildings, but a devotion to this peaceful, still moment at the beginning of God's presence with us on this earth.

It was St. Francis, because of his meditations on the life of Christ, who created the first ever Nativity scene in 1223. This ushered a new devotion to the significance of this holy season that the Church had not yet fully received or appreciated. Seeing the holy sites of Christ's birth on his own pilgrimage to the Holy Land, St. Francis' inspiration in devotion to the birth of Jesus impacts us to this very day in our own Nativity scenes this Christmas season. Gazing upon the infant Christ in the messiness of a manger, it reminds us of so many paradoxes and graces revealed by the living God. We see God's self-emptying in becoming so small, his approachability in the tenderness of a baby, the silence of a still night as a privileged place of encounter, and the invitation to give our hearts the simplicity that discovers the Lord in the child as St. Francis once did.

May these graces, and many more, bless you in this sacred season. It's a joy to serve you as your Pastor, and please also keep me in your prayers as we pause at the end of the year to gaze upon this central mystery of the Incarnation together.

Peace of the Lord Jesus,

Luke D. Meyer

Fr. Luke D. Meyer, Pastor



PARISH HIGHLIGHTS

Vocations

Deacon Ted LeMeir ordained to the permanent
Diaconate 11/15/25
Deacon Richie Stenger – Seminarian
Mount St. Mary Theology IV

New Parishioners: 194

Baptisms: 66

Confirmations: 46

Weddings: 29

Funerals: 19

Adult Baptisms and Confirmations (OCIA): 28

✦ 2025 Year in Review ✦

✦ January

- Oremus Prayer Series began with Fr. Foertsch
- Marriage Ministry hosted Couples Trivia Night and Pizza & Parenting
- 2nd Grade Reconciliation Retreat

✦ February

- REFORM Wellness Seminar
- First Reconciliation for 2nd Grade
- Couples Night Out – Dcn. Krejci
- Dr. Samuel Backman Organ Concert
- Retreat for OCIC Class
- OCIA Rite of Sending and Rite of Election
- Middle and High School Ski Trip

✦ March

- 3rd Grade Confirmation Retreat
- Parish Mission with Fr. Dominic Bouck
- Walking with Purpose Lenten Bible Study
- Hosted Diocesan Rite of Election

✦ April

- Holy Week and Easter
- 13 people received into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil
- Adventures in Marriage Retreat
- Close of Religious Education with Mass and Ice Cream Social
- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

✦ May

- 13 men “licensed” in the Fishermen
- High School Senior Recognition Mass
- Hosted 2500 people at our first Block Party
- Spring Food Drive
- Over 100 musicians perform in parish Spring Concert, “To Mary, Our Mother” closing the 24–25 Performing Arts Series

✦ June

- Celebration of Pentecost and OCIC
- CYA Mass with Bishop Folda
- Farewell Party for Fr. Foertsch
- Corpus Christi Procession

✦ July

- Mysteries and Messengers – Visit and Preaching by Dominican Friars
- Collected Baby Items for Catholic Charities with the Crib Project
- 15 High School Students attended the Steubenville Youth Conference
- Celebration of our Parish Feast Day
- Hosted 29th Annual Parish Picnic



Candidates and Catechumens received into the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil



Spring Concert in honor of Mary, Our Mother



Eucharistic Procession for Corpus Christi Sunday

✦ 2025 Year in Review ✦



Group photo of children and volunteers at this summer's Vacation Bible School



Ordination of Ted LeMier to the Permanent Diaconate



Reception of OCIA Candidates into the Catholic Church on Christ the King Sunday

✦ August

- 80 children participated in "Treasures of the Kingdom" VBS
- Hosted Annual Pilgrimage to Our Lady of the Prairies at Carmel of Mary

✦ September

- Religious Education and YDisciple began with Opening Mass and Meet the Teacher
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd began with 3 Level I, 2 Level II, and 1 Level III sessions each week
- Fall Food Drive for Emergency Food Pantry and Dorothy Day
- "Catholic Classics" Concert opens 25-26 Performing Arts Series
- Fr. Luke led parishioners on a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi
- "Wine and the Word" Marriage Ministry event at Bear Creek Winery

✦ October

- Feast of St. Francis of Assisi Pet Blessing
- Catholic Man Night
- The Thoughtful Home presentation by Dia Boyle
- New Parishioner Open House
- Faith in Form: Iconography Retreat
- Eucharistic procession for All Saints Day

✦ November

- REFORM with the Saints Seminar
- All Souls Day Organ Recital performed by Patrick McGuire
- Fall Festival
- Deacon Ted LeMier ordained to the Permanent Diaconate
- Undone – Women's Healing Retreat
- 14 people received into full communion with the Church on Christ the King

✦ December

- Began Catechist Training for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Level I, part B
- YDisciple Advent Dinner Party
- Advent Giving Trees, 690 ornaments collected, benefitting Women's Care Center, St. Gianna's Maternity Home, & St. Michael's Mission
- 3rd Annual Advent Lessons and Carols